THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

Private sector participation in education sector

*154. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to evolve an appropriate policy-framework, to facilitate greater private sector participation in the education sector-both in schools and universities-and also to encourage top-class foreign universities and institutions to set up collaborative institutions in the country, through public and private partnerships, and offer degrees and diplomas of same quality and standards of education, as in their own countries;

(b) if so, what were the other decisions taken; and

(c) by when they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) There is currently no bar to private participation in the Education sector. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as modified in 1992) encourages non-governmental and voluntary effort in Education, while preventing the establishment of institutions which intend to commercialize Education. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as modified in 1992) envisages that "in the interest of maintaining standards and for several other valid reasons, the commercialization of technical and professional education will be curbed. An alternative system will be devised to involve private and voluntary effort in this sector of Education, in conformity with accepted norms and goals". There is already private investment in all sectors of education and the share of such private investment is progressively growing, starting from Primary to Higher and Technical Education.

As part of the Government's commitment to the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) to ensure that all Institutions of Higher Learning and professional education retain their autonomy, Universities are permitted to collaborate and enter into appropriate Memoranda of Understanding with foreign Universities/Institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education has detailed regulations for entry and operation of Foreign Universities/Institutions for imparting Technical Education in India. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Education has been allowed since February, 2000 under the automatic route, without any sectoral cap.

Allotment of small mining blocks

*155. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether allotment of small mining blocks is not conducive to economies of scale of production, and is not, therefore viable;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to discourage small mining blocks;

(c) whether allotment of small mining blocks is not productive in view of use of low cost technologies of excavating minerals leading to lower mineral realization; and

(d) if so, the reasons for which Government is not disbanding the allotment of small mining blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (c) Economic viability of mining operation depends on demand for a particular mineral in the market, accessibility to the deposit, depth and thickness of the deposit, method of mining and equipment and machinery used for mining, and not necessarily on the size of the mining lease. However, in order to ensure systematic and scientific mining of major minerals for optimum utilization of the mineral resources, the government has prescribed minimum size of mining lease at four hectares in respect of all major minerals, except for beach sand minerals where the minimum area limit is two hectares, and for small deposits which are shallow in nature, isolated and do not exceed more than 200 meters in strike length, the minimum area is one hectare.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply given to (a) to (c) above.

Increasing the target for Power Generation

156. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has drafted a model renewable energy law to increase the target for electricity generation via this route to 10 per cent by 2010, as against 2012 currently and 20 per cent by 2020, of the total power generated in the country;

(b) whether country has an installed capacity of 10,406.69 mw, against the global capacity of 2,00,000 mw renewable electricity generation;

(c) whether the law envisages making renewable electricity purchases obligatory by mandating electricity utilities to purchase from renewable sources, and it also calls for stringent penalties in case of violation; and

(d) by when a final decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) No, Sir. However, grid-interactive renewable power installed capacity in the country at the end of the 10th Plan, i.e., upto 31.3.2007 was 10,250 MW or about 7.75 per cent of the then total installed capacity of around 1,32,329 MW in the country. Further capacity addition of 14,000 MW has been proposed during the 11th Plan. Thus, by the end of the 11th Plan grid-interactive renewable power installed capacity is likely to cross 24,000 MW or about 12 per cent of the then likely total installed capacity of around 2,00,000 MW.

(b) Grid-interactive renewable power installed capacity in the country has reached 11,063 MW as on 31.10.2007.

(c) Does not airse. However, the Electricity Act 2003, National Electricity Policy 2005 and Tariff Policy 2006 make it obligatory upon State Electricity Regulatory Commissions to fix certain percentage for purchase of power from renewable energy sources in the area of a distribution licensee and to fix preferential tariffs for the same.

(d) does not arise.